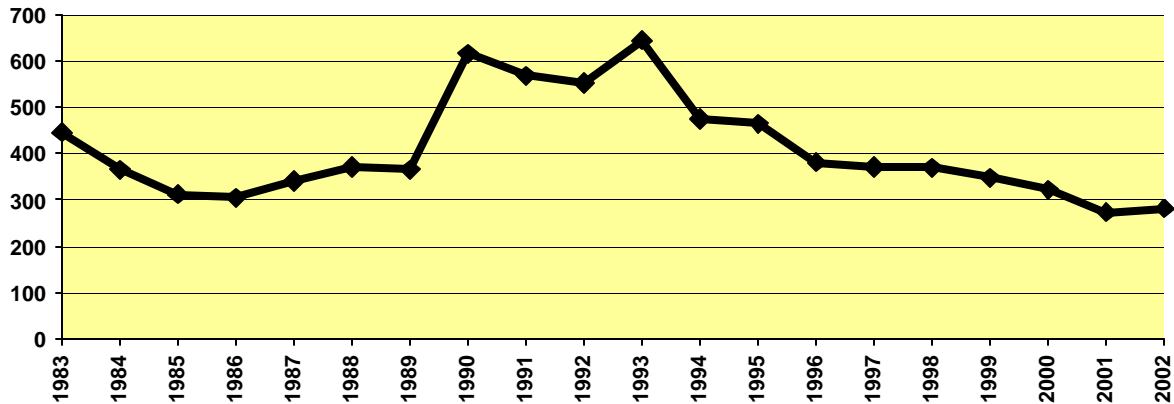


# ASSAULT

Aggravated Assault describes an unlawful attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury. This type of assault is usually accompanied by the use of a weapon or by means likely to produce death or great bodily harm. Attempts are included since it is not necessary that injury result when a gun, knife, or other weapon is used which could and probably would result in serious personal injury if the crime were successfully completed.

## Aggravated Assault in Cambridge, 1983-2002



**272 reported in 2001 · 281 reported in 2002**

Unlike murder, robbery, and other violent crime, assault is born in the heat of the moment. The motivation behind an assault is rarely personal gain, and the offender often later regrets the incident. Perhaps the most preventable violent crime, many assaults in the making are probably curtailed through the careful use of control and restraint.

However, assault is a very serious crime because of the great risk of critical injury to the victim. Very often, blind luck or quick medical attention is all that separates an aggravated assault from a homicide.

Assault has been on a general increase over the last 20 years. Between 1984 and 1989, it registered about 350 incidents per year; in 1990, it suddenly jumped 41 percent to an unprecedented 614 reports. It peaked at 643 in 1993; since then, it has declined each year. 2001's statistics registered as the lowest since 1980, with 272 incidents while 2002 is right behind last year with 281 assaults.

A good portion of these fluctuations can be attributed to the frequency of which the crime is *reported* rather than the frequency of its actual occurrence. As domestic violence awareness has increased over the last decade, so has the willingness of domestic violence victims to report abuse to the police.

We reported decreases in aggravated assault during the first and second quarters of the year, when compared with their respective quarters the previous year. The third quarter, from July 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup>, registered an increase, although minimal, at 5% when compared with the same time span in 2001. Three months later, after an overall static autumn, the crime is up four percent for the entire year.

Despite advances made by domestic violence victim advocates in recent years, experts estimate that between 60

### Relationships

Another way to look at aggravated assaults is to classify the relationship between the offender and the victim. Many, but not all, of the assault categorizations are based on this relationship. This 1st shows the relationship between the offender and the victim in the 282 aggravated assaults in 2002:

Relationship	Total	%
Stranger or Unknown	63	23%
Misc. Acquaintance	89	33%
Romantic Partner	20	7%
Spouse	14	5%
Ex-Romantic Partner	10	4%
Parent/Child	7	3%
Co-Worker/Employee	11	4%
Client/Patron	25	9%
Neighbor	7	3%
Sibling	5	2%
Ex-Spouse	2	1%
Schoolmate	15	6%

and 80 percent of domestic assaults are never reported to the police. It is very likely that factors including apathy, fear of police contact, embarrassment, and other factors lead to underreporting of various assaults involving acquaintances, gangs, and conflicts among the homeless. The result is that assault statistics must be viewed with extreme care.

Since domestic assaults and assaults among acquaintances dominate the percentages, the crime naturally registers high in areas that have a high residential population. These neighborhoods include Cambridgeport, Riverside, and North Cambridge. The total for Cambridgeport is boosted by drunken assaults in or near the neighborhood bars, and the statistic for East Cambridge includes a number of juvenile fights near the mall. The unusually high number of assaults in Strawberry Hill have no relation to each other. As always, domestic assaults account for the largest portion of assaults. Domestic assaults and other domestic crimes are reviewed in the *Domestic Crimes* section of this report. Percentages changed only very little from the 2001 Annual Report.

## **Assault Trends Observed in 2002**

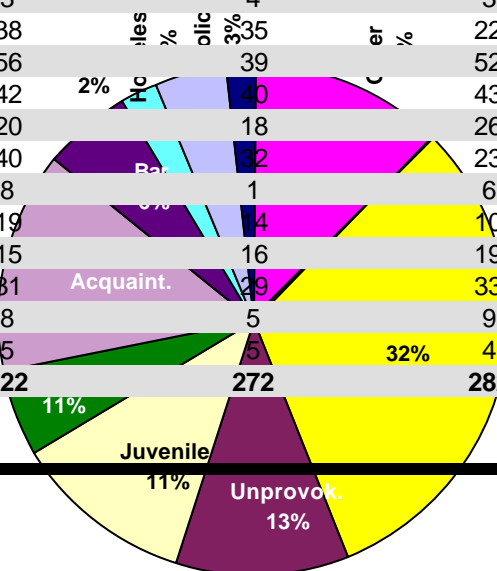
Although not concise and distinctive crime patterns, the following trends in violent behavior were noted in 2002. A majority of these locations are repetitive hot spots for assaults, possibly due to their locations near bars, etc. and heavily populated neighborhoods, such as Cambridgeport. Likewise, areas such as Strawberry Hill rarely experience a plethora of activity. Here is a run-down of locations that experienced a notable amount of activity as well as a few re-caps of some eminent assaults:

- In the recent month of December, juvenile activity in the area of the Cambridge-side Galleria sprouted. During the most recent episode, two juveniles from Boston were stabbed after a fight involving approximately 20 individuals ensued.
- A disturbing incident occurred on February 12<sup>th</sup> when Jorge Castillo was arrested for stabbing a 14-year-old girl while walking along Putnam Ave. and Magazine St. Castillo was wearing a turban at the time of the incident, and as the young girl walked by him with her mother, he produced a sharp knife. Castillo immediately took flight, and discarded the awl he used to perforate the young girl, and was later seen by officers. Once Castillo saw police approach him, he threw off the turban he was wearing. After questioned by officers and positively identified by the victim's mother, Castillo was arrested. Reason(s) why this assault took place are unknown.
- One of the most horrid assaults occurred in August after a homeless man who was allowed to live with his female victim came to a party and struck her in the head with a baseball bat five times. The woman suffered severe facial trauma and was transported to Beth Israel Hospital. The culprit in this assault was arrested the following day.
- In early June, an argument broke out between two groups of young men in the Washington Elms courtyard. One suspect produced a 9mm gun and while another man attempted to get the firearm out of the suspect's hand, he was subsequently shot three times in the shoulder, scapula, and lower back. A second male was also shot after a total of five rounds were fired.
- Harvard and Central Squares continue to be hotspots for altercations, mainly during the early hours of morning, sometimes stemming from situations that arose while inside the bar that spill out onto the street. This was the case in eleven of the incidents throughout 2002 in these two designated areas.
- A knife was involved in 45 of the assaults this past year, 30 of which resulted in arrests. One arrest was executed when a Cambridge resident used a double-edged knife to stab his victim in the back of the head during a fight where clubs, batons, sticks, and bricks were used.
- Historically speaking, gang-related activity has repeatedly taken place on the 300 block of Rindge Ave. This past year, only two such incidents arose and the suspects involved in both incidents were positively identified.

# GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF AGGRAVATED ASSAULTS FROM 2000 TO 2002

NEIGHBORHOOD	2000	2001	2002
East Cambridge	37	34	32
M.I.T. Area	3	4	3
Inman/Harrington	38	35	22
Area 4	56	39	52
Cambridgeport	42	40	43
Mid-Cambridge	20	18	26
Riverside	40	32	23
Agassiz	8	1	6
Peabody	19	14	10
West Cambridge	15	16	19
North Cambridge	31	29	33
Cambridge Highlands	8	5	9
Strawberry Hill	5	5	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>282</b>

## ASSAULT CLASSIFICATIONS



TYPE	2001	2002
Domestic	73	88
Unprovoked	36	31
Juvenile/Gang	36	32
Traffic/Parking	19	15
Acquaintance	31	40
Bar/Liquor	18	16
Shop Owner/Patron	6	7
Homeless	7	12
On Police Officer	7	6
Landlord/Neighbor	5	2
Psychotic Episode	6	1
Workplace	13	10
Affray/Brawl	13	17
Other	2	5

## Simple Assault

Simple Assaults, unlike aggravated assaults, are not scored among the Part I Crimes (Index Crimes). Simple assaults do not involve the use of a dangerous weapon (including shoes) and are not intended to cause serious injury. Examples of simple assault include a shove, a punch in the stomach, or a slap in the face. We receive between 500 and 650 reports for simple assault each year.

Six hundred thirty simple assaults were reported in 2002, which displays a 12 percent decrease from the 714 assaults that occurred in 2001. These 630 assaults are more comparable to 1997 when there were 606 assaults reported, and again in 1998 when 648 were reported. The 714 assaults registered in 2001 are the highest in over a decade. If lack of reporting is a problem for aggravated assaults, it is probably doubly so for

## Preventing Assault

- Check out the tips for preventing rape and street robbery to prevent unprovoked, "street" assaults.
- If you have been abused by, or are in fear of, your domestic partner or spouse, get help. The problem usually becomes worse if it is not addressed. The "domestic crimes" section of this report lists telephone numbers that you or your partner can call to seek assistance.
- Report assault when it happens, even if you do not believe it to be "serious." Assaults that are not reported cannot be considered by police administrators when they make decisions about how to allocate manpower and funds; if there is a problem with a bar, a household, a school, or any other place where assaults are likely to happen, *the police need to know about it.*

\_\_\_\_\_